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(54) A fire fighting installation for discharging a liquid-gas fog

(57) The object of the invention is to provide a novel fire extinguishing installation enabling effective delivery of liquid with immediate effective mixing of gas in the liquid right from the start. This is achieved by a fire fighting installation comprising a liquid source (8), a pump (1) connected to said liquid source, and a gas source (4) connected by way of a line (30) to an outlet line (2) of the pump for mixing gas with outbound extinguishing liquid delivered to spray heads (3), wherein the pump is a high pressure pump (1) having a comparatively small flow, the pump providing in the outlet line (2), when the fire fighting installation is put into operation, a pressure which corresponds to the pressure provided in the outlet line (2) by the gas source (4) and providing in the outlet line (2) a liquid pressure which adjusts to a decreasing pressure provided in the outlet line (2) by the gas source (4), for producing an extinguishing fluid in the form of a finely divided liquid mist comprising a mixture of gas and liquid.

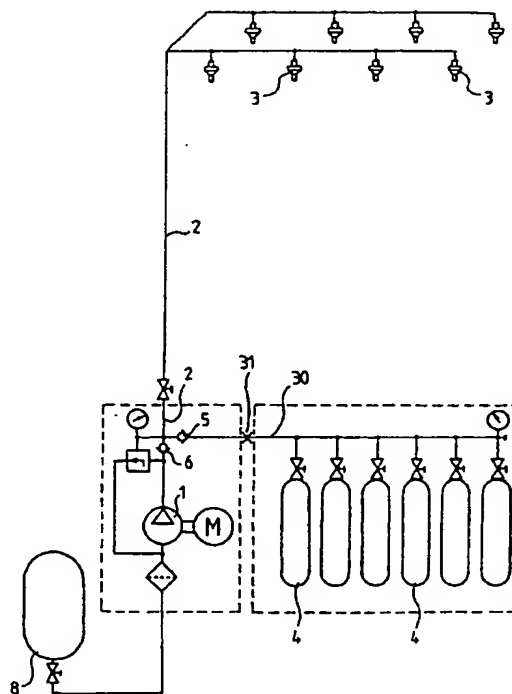


FIG.

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a fire fighting installation comprising a liquid source, a pump connected to said liquid source, and a gas source connected by way of a line to an outlet line of the pump for mixing gas with outbound extinguishing liquid delivered to spray heads.

[0002] The invention relates also to a method for mixing gas with liquid for providing an extinguishing fluid for a fire fighting installation comprising an outlet line leading to spray heads, said method comprising the steps of providing gas at a pressure to the outlet line and delivering extinguishing liquid in the outlet line by a pump, whereby the gas and the extinguishing liquid are provided in the outlet line at substantially equal pressures.

[0003] WO 94/07570 discloses such a system for fighting fire, the system relying on the use of foam under different kinds of typical fire fighting conditions. The system comprises an air compressor and a water pump. An air pressure regulator is arranged to vary the air pressure in response to the pump discharge water pressure by taking a signal from water pressure discharge tank, to keep a desired ratio of air and water delivered to the fire stream delivery means.

[0004] US 4 981 178 discloses a system for fighting fire, said system relying on the use of foam in order to use only small amounts of water. Water pressure and air volume are controlled by one device, and air pressure and water volume are controlled by separate devices.

[0005] SU-A-787048 and SU-A-135344 disclose fire extinguishing sprinkler systems, comprising a liquid vessel and a compressed gas vessel. In SU-A-787048 the sprinklers are fed with water from a water tank, the water being forced out from the tank by means of a compressed air bottle. In SU-A-135344 a compressed inert gas cylinder is adapted to feed not only liquid from a liquid vessel, but also the inert gas into a mixing chamber from which an extinguishing mixture is fed to the sprinklers.

[0006] Certain kinds of gasoline fires, for example a kerosene fire in an aircraft jet engine undergoing an engine test in a hangar designed for that purpose, are nearly impossible to extinguish even by means of strong mist-like jets of liquid, as suggested for example in WO92/20453. Such a jet engine fire will only go out when the entire hangar, which may typically have a volume of about 3000 m³, has been subjected to "total flooding", i.e. is in practice entirely filled with liquid mist having very small particles.

[0007] The liquid mist can in principle be produced with apparatus as described in WO93/10859. In that application, an outgoing ascension tube of a hydraulic accumulator is provided with wall apertures, so that the propellant gas of the accumulator initially drives out liquid only, and after the liquid level has sunk to be even with the uppermost tube wall aperture, mixing of propel-

lent gas into the outbound liquid is gradually started as the liquid level sinks and more tube wall apertures are exposed. In the final stage of emptying the accumulator, it is possible to obtain a liquid mist having sufficiently small droplets for the present purpose, but too large a portion of the liquid contained in the hydraulic accumulator will go waste.

[0008] It is an object of the present invention to provide a novel installation enabling effective delivery of liquid with immediate effective mixing of gas into the liquid right from the start and delivery of mist by means of a small and inexpensive pump.

[0009] The installation of the invention is characterized in that the pump is a high pressure pump having a comparatively small flow, the pump being of the type providing in the outlet line, when the fire fighting installation is put into operation, a pressure which corresponds to the pressure provided in the outlet line by the gas source and providing in the outlet line a liquid pressure which adjusts to a decreasing pressure provided in the outlet line by the gas source, for producing an extinguishing fluid in the form of a finely divided liquid mist comprising a mixture of gas and liquid.

[0010] Preferred embodiments of the invention are in appended claims 2 - 4.

[0011] The purpose of the gas is to enable fine division of the liquid droplets, which produces a finely divided liquid mist. When the pressure in the line leading to the nozzles is increased, the liquid mist becomes even more finely divided.

[0012] The gas source can advantageously be constituted by a plurality of compressed-gas bottles coupled in parallel. The gas may be nitrogen, argon, air, etc. In principle, any suitable gas may be used. The contents of the compressed-gas bottles may be partially in liquid form, depending on the type of gas employed. The charge pressure of the gas bottles, like the operating pressure of the pump, may be approximately 50-200 bar, even though both lower and higher pressures are possible.

[0013] A comparatively small pump flow in this context means that the flow is smaller than the flow capacity of the relevant sprinklers or spray heads at maximum operating pressure. The pump flow may be 10-80%, preferably 20-50% of the total flow of extinguishing fluid at maximum operating pressure.

[0014] Thus, one can cope with a small pump that is inexpensive and requires little electric power.

[0015] It is an object of the present invention to further provide a novel method enabling production of finely divided liquid mist for a fire fighting installation by means of a small and inexpensive pump.

[0016] The method of the invention is characterized by providing a finely divided liquid mist comprising a mixture of gas and liquid by the steps of

- providing a high pressure of 50 - 300 bar in the outlet line by the gas source, and thereafter decreasing

- this pressure; and
- using a high pressure pump which is of the type that it provides in the outlet line a liquid pressure which corresponds to said high pressure and adjusts the liquid pressure to the subsequent decreasing pressure provided by the gas source, while providing by the pump said extinguishing liquid in the outlet line by a comparatively small flow.

[0017] Thus, after the pump initially provides a high pressure in the outlet line, the pump provides in the outlet line subsequently a liquid pressure which corresponds to the decreasing pressure provided by the gas source.

[0018] When said high pressure is provided by the gas source when the fire fighting installation is put into operation, immediate and effective mixing of gas into the liquid right from the start takes place.

[0019] In the following the invention will be described with reference to the accompanying drawing showing a preferred embodiment of the installation in accordance with the invention.

[0020] The embodiment shown in the drawing comprises a pump 1 connected to a liquid source 8, said pump having an outlet line 2 leading to a plurality of spray heads 3. The pump 1 may be a high-pressure pump with a typical operating pressure of 50-200 bar. A plurality of compressed-gas bottles 4 coupled in parallel are connected to the outlet line 2 of the pump via a check valve 5 ensuring that no liquid will enter the compressed-gas bottles 4. A check valve 6 mounted in the outlet line 2 of the pump ensures likewise that the gas will be correctly routed. The compressed-air bottles 4 can be filled with nitrogen. The pressure of the gas in the compressed-gas bottles can suitably be 100-300 bar.

[0021] A throttle 31 has been coupled in the line 30 between the compressed-gas bottles and the outlet line 2 of the pump 1. The purpose of the throttle 31 is to enable adjustment of the mixing ratio of liquid from the liquid source 8 and gas from the compressed gas bottles 4 in the extinguishing fluid flowing in the outlet line 2. The throttle 31 is not indispensable. It could be contemplated that the mixing ratio could be adjusted by variously dimensioning the line 30.

[0022] When the fire fighting installation is put into operation the gas bottles 4 provide in the outlet line 2 a pressure and the pump 1 provides a correspondingly high pressure in the outlet line, whereby gas and liquid are mixed in the outlet line 2. Thereafter the pressure of the pump 1 adjusts itself in accordance with the decreasing pressure of the compressed-gas bottles 4 for effective production of finely divided liquid mist, so that the pump flow is 20-100% of the declining total flow of extinguishing fluid. When there is no gas in the compressed-gas bottles 4 and the gas pressure has decreased to zero, the pump flow is 100% of the total flow of extinguishing fluid.

[0023] Effective production of finely divided liquid mist can be upheld. Sea-water or lake-water can be used if necessary.

[0024] The invention has been described in the above by way of an example, and therefore it should be noted that the invention may vary in its details in many ways within the scope of the appended claims. Thus for example the execution of the compressed-gas source may vary. The gas source need not necessarily be constituted by compressed-gas bottles.

Claims

1. A fire fighting installation comprising a liquid source (8), a pump (1) connected to said liquid source, and a gas source (4) connected by way of a line (30) to an outlet line (2) of the pump for mixing gas with outbound extinguishing liquid delivered to spray heads (3), **characterized in that** the pump is a high pressure pump (1) having a comparatively small flow, the pump being of the type providing in the outlet line (2), when the fire fighting installation is put into operation, a pressure which corresponds to the pressure provided in the outlet line (2) by the gas source (4) and providing in the outlet line (2) a liquid pressure which adjusts to a decreasing pressure provided in the outlet line (2) by the gas source (4), for producing an extinguishing fluid in the form of a finely divided liquid mist comprising a mixture of gas and liquid.
2. A fire fighting installation as claimed in claim 1, **characterized in that** the gas source is constituted by a plurality of compressed-gas bottles (4) coupled in parallel.
3. An installation as claimed in claim 1 or 2, **characterized in that** a throttle (31) has been coupled in the line (30) between the compressed-gas bottles and the outlet line (2) of the pump (1).
4. An installation as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3, **characterized in that** the initial charge pressure of the gas source (4) is 100-300 bar and that the flow of the pump (1) is approximately 10-80% of the total flow of extinguishing fluid at maximum operating pressure.
5. A method for mixing gas with liquid for providing an extinguishing fluid for a fire fighting installation comprising an outlet line (2) leading to spray heads (3), said method comprising the steps of providing gas at a pressure to the outlet line and delivering extinguishing liquid in the outlet line by a pump (1), whereby the gas and the extinguishing liquid are provided in the outlet line at substantially equal pressures, **characterized by** providing a finely di-

vided liquid mist comprising a mixture of gas and liquid by the steps of

- providing a high pressure of 50 - 300 bar in the outlet line (2) by the gas source (8), and thereafter decreasing this pressure; and 5
- using a high pressure pump (1) which is of the type that it provides in the outlet line (2) a liquid pressure which corresponds to said high pressure and adjusts the liquid pressure to the subsequent decreasing pressure provided by the gas source (8), while providing by the pump said extinguishing liquid in the outlet line by a comparatively small flow. 10

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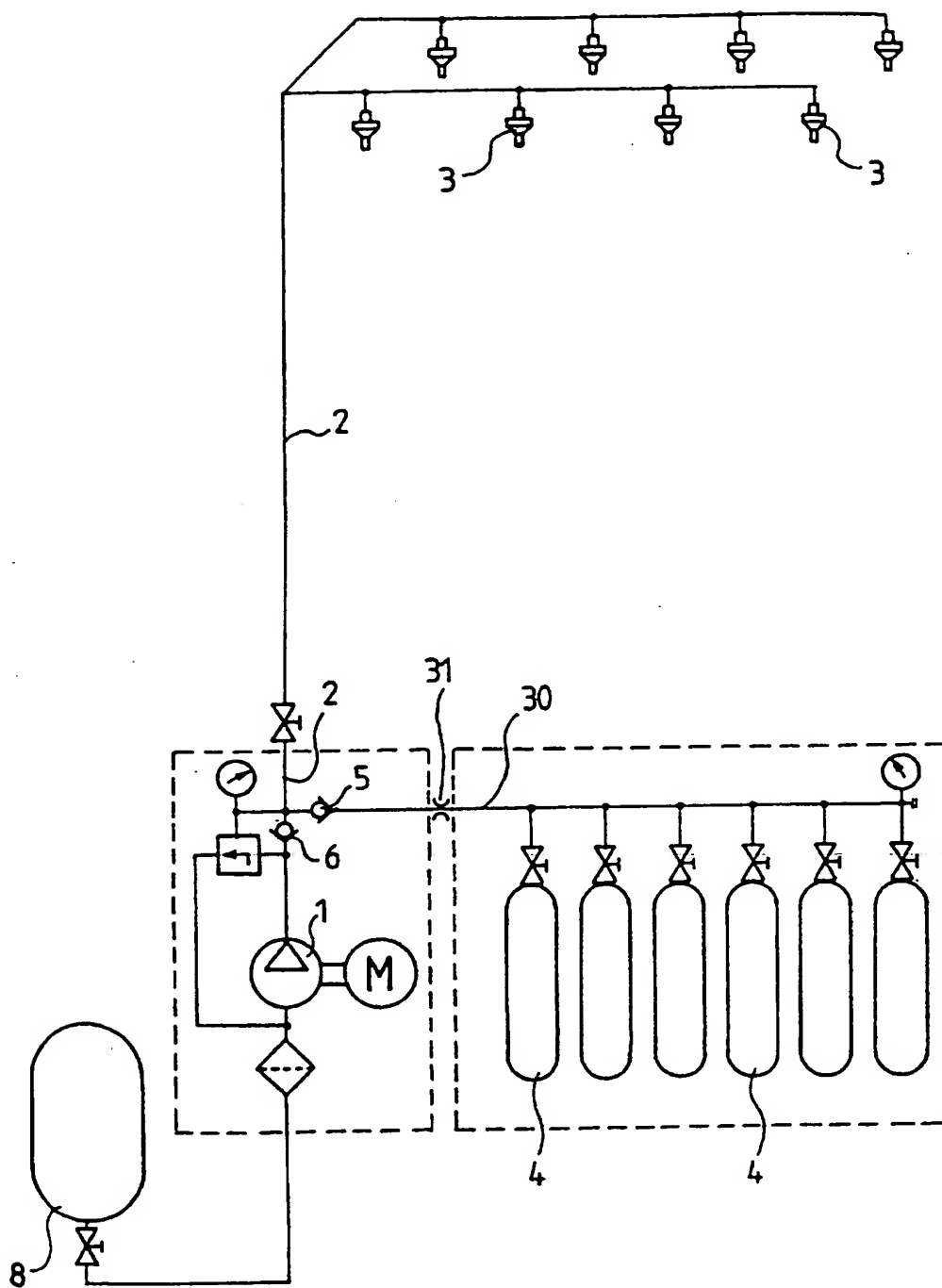


FIG.